**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 389**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 2-2021 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]  
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**389. Inkosi R N Cebekhulu (IFP) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

(1) In light of the fact that the Free State Agriculture, an organisation that represents the interests of commercial farmers in the province, recently accused the President of the Republic, Mr M C Ramaphosa, of failing to create a clear plan for the agricultural sector for the year 2021 and in the future, as well as the absence of a concise plan from the President’s State of the Nation Address which has caused a concern for farmers across the Republic, what are the Government’s plans to assist farmers in 2021 and beyond, seeing that the national state of disaster may not end in the near future;

(2) Whether the Government has made provision for contingency plans regarding food security in this uncertain period; if not, what are the details of the Government’s position regarding the state of food security in the Republic in the near future and beyond; if so, what are the plans? **NW395E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

1. The government’s plan to assist farmers in 2021 and beyond include the following:

* In 2021 and beyond the implementation of the eight (8) production schemes in the AAMP in partnership with the Provincial Departments of Agriculture and other sector partners will be rolled out. The eight production schemes are: grains, white meat, red meat, oilseeds, fibre, industrial crops, fruits and nuts and vegetables.

* DALRRD will continue to implement drought mitigation strategies inclusive of developing drought-resistant seeds by the ARC, planting and storing fodder, removal of invasive plants and management strategies to prevent soil degradation.
* The department will pursue the allocation of state land as part of transforming land ownership patterns and promoting access to land, especially for the previously disadvantaged, through allo­cating land to smallholder producers and enhanced comprehensive support to the smallholders.
* The DALRRD remains committed to supporting agricultural producers towards intensifying the domestic food production amidst the COVID 19 situation. To this effect, implementation of Programmes such as the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), Ilima Letsema and LandCare are continuing in all Provinces.
* In 2021/22 at least 9 500 vulnerable households will be supported to produce own food through household food gardens and a total of 65 314 hectares will be planted through the Ilima/Letsema conditional grant support of R597 million.
* Support will further be provided through CASP conditional grant amounting to R1.4 billion to 7 800 smallholder and subsistence producers with on-farm infrastructure.
* The Department provided a R1, 2 billion Covid-19 Disaster Relief Agricultural Intervention Fund to provide relief to struggling smallholder and communal farmers in 2020/21.
* The Department is implementing the R1 billion Presidential Employment Stimulus initiative for subsistence producers. This will enable producers to retain self-employment in the agricultural sector.

These interventions are aimed at ensuring increased household food production, whilst increasing food access and improved livelihoods of poor and marginalised households, thereby contributing to food security and economic growth.

1. **Yes**. Food security remains a fundamental strategic imperative of the South African government in this uncertain period of the COVID 19 situation. The Government, through a multi-sectoral approach, continues to implement the National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (2017 – 2022) which is coordinated from the Office of the Deputy President and Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). The Plan embodies the government’s collective response to the challenge of food insecurity and malnutrition. A number of programmes under this plan are already being implemented using the existing resources in various government departments.

This plan is implemented through six strategic objectives which are as outlined below:

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| **6 Strategic Objectives (SO) Anchoring the Plan** | | **Lead**  **Department** | | **Other Key Departments and Social Partners** | |
| **1** | Institutional Arrangements for food and nutrition security  Establish multi-sectoral Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) Councils and supporting structures oversee alignment of policies, legislation and programmes; coordination and implementation of programmes and services which address FNS and; draft new policies and legislation where appropriate | | Office of the Deputy President  DPME | | DALRRD; DSD; COGTA;  DBE; DTI; DRDLR; Provinces; Local government; Civil Society; Organised Labour, Development Partners |
| **2** | Establish inclusive local food value chains to support access to nutritious, affordable foods | | DALRRD | | Water & Sanitation; DTI; DSBD; DST, NT; Civil Society, Development Partners |
| **3** | Expand targeted social protection measures and sustainable livelihood programmes | | DSD | | DOH; Home Affairs; DBE;  Provinces and local government; Civil Society; Development Partners |
| **4** | Scale up of high impact nutrition interventions targeting women, infants and children | | DOH | | DBE; DSD; Home Affairs; Civil Society; Development Partners |
| **5** | Develop an integrated communication plan to influence people across the life cycle to make informed food and nutrition decisions | | DOH | | DBE; DSD; Home Affairs; Development Partners |
| **6** | Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for FNS in South Africa and establish an integrated risk management system for monitoring FNS related risks. | | StatsSA  DALRRD | | DPME; DALRRD; DOH; DBE; Statistics SA; COGTA |

In addition, government implemented a number of interventions in response to COVID 19. These include social protection initiatives and programmes that are aimed at strengthening resilience of livelihood systems in various communities. As part of the governments’ collective response, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) is implementing a number of initiatives. These include:

* Intensifying efforts to geographically locate food insecure, vulnerable and hungry population within the country in fulfilment of the Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme spearheaded by SADC.
* DALRRD further conducted a rapid assessment in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations. This was aimed at quantifying the impact of the COVID 19 on agriculture, trade as well as food and nutrition security.
* A total of R81.2 million has also been committed by the Department to conducting the National Food and Nutrition Security Survey for 2021/22 targeting over 84 000 households nationally. The results of this survey and the rapid assessment will inform the collective planning and proper targeting of food security interventions.

Although a few challenges were experienced by producers and suppliers associated with acquisition of agricultural production inputs in the country, overall no major disruptions were experienced during the 2020/21 planting season, which started in October 2020. Despite the challenges of uncertain weather patterns, such as floods and draught, experienced of in some parts of the country, the weather outlook for the 2020/21 planting season has been positive. According to the Crop Estimates Committee (CEC) the preliminary area estimate of maize as at February 2021 is 2,776 million ha, which is 6, 35% more than the 2,611 million ha planted for the previous season. This follows a bumper harvest of about 15.3 million tons of commercial maize that is estimated to be harvested for this season. The country has ample maize to meet the demand in the human and feed markets, and will be able to export into neighbouring countries.

The government of RSA is committed to ensuring food and nutrition security amid the COVID 19 pandemic.